

SAVE THE DEVERON VALLEY

The Full Impact Ledger

A community balance sheet for Pathway to 2030

SSEN has told Scotland what Pathway to 2030 may add. This report asks what it may cost.

Reviewed working draft v1.1 for public review | 28 July 2026

STATUS NOTE This evidence-led working draft updates the 1 July report. It does not make findings on unverified matters. It separates verified public record, promoter claims, community evidence, reported estimates, reported local intelligence, public-interest questions and clearly identified inference. The Cairngorms wildfire remains a live incident; its final burn scar and ecological losses are not yet established.

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Executive summary

SSEN Transmission presents jobs, investment, supply-chain activity and wider economic benefit from major grid investment. Save the Deveron Valley does not reject the need for clean energy, grid investment or climate action. But a benefits ledger is not a balance sheet.

A full public-interest assessment must also count the costs, risks, losses, burdens and irreversible effects carried by host communities, landscapes, rivers, farms, wildlife, roads, emergency services, public authorities and future generations.

[VERIFIED PUBLIC RECORD] SSEN reported on 17 June 2026 that ground investigations were beginning at the two shortlisted Strathbogie Hub sites, Cruchie and Rivestone, to inform the continuing site-selection process. The Beauly-Blackhillock-New Deer-Peterhead 400 kV overhead-line application is separately before the DPEA inquiry process. [S2-S4]

CURRENT POSITION The current public record still describes two shortlisted hub sites. This report does not state that a preferred Strathbogie Hub site has been selected.

The July 2026 Glenmore and Strath Nethy wildfire has made the resilience questions more urgent. It has required a prolonged multi-agency operation, affected communities and businesses, caused closures and evacuation, threatened or affected woodland and other habitats, and continued to smoulder and burn deep in the ground after visible flames reduced. It is not evidence that a particular Deveron proposal is unsafe. It is evidence that rural infrastructure must be assessed against real compound emergencies rather than calm-weather assumptions. [S6-S11]

If the system is connected, the scrutiny must be connected too.

What this updated report asks for

- A plain-English impact ledger and like-for-like comparison for every shortlisted site before site selection hardens.
- A single public master timetable showing surveys, enabling works, construction, mitigation, monitoring, restoration, temporary infrastructure and decommissioning.
- Assessment of the complete connected infrastructure chain: hub, converter and cable works, overhead line, roads, compounds, crossings and reasonably foreseeable future connections.
- A climate-adaptation and compound-risk assessment that includes wildfire, drought, extreme heat, flooding, storms, winter access, smoke, power loss, blocked routes and simultaneous incidents.
- Early, documented engagement with emergency services and regulators; route-specific access, water, containment, communications and recovery arrangements.
- Clear mitigation status: what is merely proposed, designed, funded, consented, operational, monitored and proven successful.
- Independent monitoring, public reporting, enforceable thresholds, corrective action and financial security where failure could leave the public carrying the risk.

What changed since 1 July 2026

Update	What it changes
Wildfire evidence	The live Cairngorms incident is added as a dated case study, with official incident status, community effects, ecological uncertainty and strict caution

Update	What it changes
	around area estimates.
Area correction	A reported figure of “just under 30 km ² ” is treated as a reported incident footprint, not as a verified final burn scar. Other public estimates differ. The Park Authority says the full nature damage was still unknown because parts of the site were unsafe to access.
Breeding season	NatureScot confirms that the main bird breeding season runs from March to August. This supports a stronger requirement for seasonal ecological assessment and recovery monitoring, without claiming species-specific mortality that has not been verified.
Climate adaptation	The fire section now tests drought, vegetation condition, wildfire spread, smoke, evacuation, road closure, prolonged attendance and concurrent demands on emergency resources.
BESS guidance	Where BESS is foreseeable or left open, the report now uses the National Fire Chiefs Council’s revised planning guidance on vegetation, external wildfire, alternative access, water, contaminated runoff, plume impacts and recovery.
Project status	The report records the current official position: two hub sites remain shortlisted and ground investigations are informing site selection; the overhead-line application is in DPEA inquiry.
Save Loch Ness learning	A master timetable, mitigation-status register and “how, when, by whom, measured how, and what if it fails?” test are added as transferable scrutiny tools.

EVIDENCE CORRECTION This update does not claim that 30 km² of land has been conclusively burnt. Until authoritative burn-scar mapping is published, “just under 30 km²” remains a reported footprint estimate and must be labelled as such.

Evidence method and safeguards

A fair ledger separates facts, claims, observations, estimates and questions. It also records the date of a claim, because fast-moving incidents and project stages change.

[VERIFIED PUBLIC RECORD] Official documents, planning portals, statutory bodies, published reports or confirmed written responses.

[PROMOTER CLAIM] Statements by SSEN, developers, applicants, consultants or associated bodies. They are not treated as false, but are not independent proof.

[COMMUNITY EVIDENCE] Local observations, photographs, road and farming knowledge, lived experience and correspondence. Sensitive locations and personal details are protected.

[REPORTED ESTIMATE] A numerical or descriptive estimate reported by a community, press or non-statutory source but not yet independently or officially confirmed.

[REPORTED LOCAL INTELLIGENCE] Information that triggers a question, not proof that a formal proposal or event exists.

[PUBLIC-INTEREST QUESTION] A matter that should be answered before decisions harden.

[INFERENCE] A conclusion drawn from verified facts, clearly identified as inference rather than direct evidence.

- Do not publish exact locations of nests, dens, setts, holts, roosts, redds, rare species, private water supplies or vulnerable archaeology.
- Do not describe a future BESS, data centre, private wire or energy park as proposed unless a formal or otherwise reliable source verifies it.
- Do not state that a road, bridge or culvert is unsafe without competent evidence. Ask for the assessment.
- Do not confuse an incident perimeter, smoke-affected area, active fire front, mapped hot spots and final burn scar.
- Recheck all fast-moving incident and planning information immediately before publication.

1. The Missing Assessment Test

What has been assessed, who has been consulted, and what remains unknown?

Communities cannot assess Strathbogie Hub meaningfully while key information remains unpublished, incomplete or scattered across projects. The question is not simply whether information may appear later. It is whether communities are being asked to respond, accept or adapt before the evidence is visible.

The public record should show the EIA and alternatives process, environmental constraints, protected-species survey scopes, roads and bridge work, watercourse crossings, climate adaptation, wildfire and emergency resilience, public bodies consulted, outstanding information and the date on which each item will be available.

Questions the ledger should answer

- Which assessments are complete, underway, deferred or not commissioned?
- Which bodies have been consulted, on what documents, and with what response?
- Will materially new information reopen a meaningful public evidence window?

Show the assessments before asking communities to accept the benefits.

2. The Master Timetable and Mitigation Status Test

A promise without a date and delivery route is not yet a plan

Major infrastructure is often described through separate programmes for the hub, overhead line, cables, roads, compounds and later mitigation. Communities need one master timetable showing how the whole construction system overlaps in real places.

The timetable should include site clearance, surveys, temporary accommodation and compounds, access works, abnormal loads, watercourse works, seasonal ecological constraints, habitat creation, restoration, monitoring, removal of temporary infrastructure, decommissioning and recovery milestones.

Every mitigation measure should be labelled by status: concept, designed, funded, legally secured, consented, started, maintained, independently monitored and proven successful.

Questions the ledger should answer

- Does habitat creation begin before loss, in parallel with it, or years later?
- Which mitigation depends on a separate permission, third party, land agreement or future funding?

- What triggers corrective action, and who can require it?

What happens when, who is responsible, how will success be measured, and what happens if the promise fails?

3. The Landscape and Place Test

Landscape is not decoration

The shortlisted sites sit within a living rural context of homes, working farms, roads, hills, woodland, heritage, recreation, wildlife movement and community identity. Landscape affects wellbeing, tourism, local economy and the ability to remain rooted in place.

A ZTV is not the same as seeing what people will live with. Like-for-like visualisations should use the same viewpoints, seasonal assumptions, lighting conditions, maximum design envelope and realistic year-one mitigation.

Questions the ledger should answer

- What will be visible from homes, daily routes, paths and community places?
- Are night lighting, security features, roads, compounds and associated infrastructure shown?
- Does the comparison use the same level of detail for both sites?

A landscape is not scenery alone. It is work, water, food, roads, wildlife, history and home.

4. The Protected Species, Breeding Season and Living Catchment Test

Ecology must shape the design before damage is accepted

The Deveron Valley is not empty land. It is a living catchment and a landscape of protected, priority, threatened, declining and sensitive species. The public ledger should not publish sensitive records, but it should show survey scope, competence, timing, methods, limitations, avoidance, supervision, licensing, stop-work measures and long-term monitoring.

NatureScot states that the main bird breeding season runs from March to August, with variation by species. Construction, vegetation removal and emergency disturbance can therefore intersect with nests and dependent young. This does not prove a particular loss; it makes seasonally competent assessment essential. [S12]

Questions the ledger should answer

- Were surveys completed in the right seasons and across every road, cable, compound and temporary works area?
- What happens if wildfire, storm damage or other emergency work disrupts the planned survey or mitigation calendar?
- How will post-incident ecological recovery be monitored without exposing sensitive locations?

Protected species must not be hidden inside a general biodiversity promise.

5. The River, Burns, Drainage and Private Water Test

Water moves across application boundaries

Roads, trenches, foundations, compounds, culverts and hardstanding can alter sediment, field drainage, groundwater, springs, private supplies, banks, fish habitat, flood pathways and pollution risk without placing a structure directly in the River Deveron.

The ledger should show crossing methods, pits and compounds, drainage isolation, baseline water quality, trigger levels, stop-work procedures, heavy-rain response, firefighting-water containment and long-term restoration.

Questions the ledger should answer

- Can contaminated runoff be isolated during power loss, fire or extreme rainfall?
- What protects wells, springs and private supplies before and after construction?
- Who receives live monitoring data, and what threshold stops work?

A river crossing is a hydrology, ecology, fisheries, flood-risk, pollution and construction-risk event.

6. The Roads, Homes and Daily Life Test

A village is not a bypass

Rothiemay, the B9022, rural lanes, bridges, verges, walls, driveways, school and nursery routes, farm accesses and emergency routes must not be reduced to haul-route lines.

The assessment should identify actual vehicles, axle loads, abnormal loads, bridge and culvert evidence, passing arrangements, winter and flood conditions, school and care movements, farm seasons, road closures, alternative access and overlapping construction programmes. A route that can be drawn on a map is not necessarily resilient in real use.

Questions the ledger should answer

- What happens if the principal route is blocked by collision, flood, snow, fire, smoke or construction?
- Can emergency services reach homes while abnormal loads or roadworks are active?
- Are all connected projects using the same roads in the same months?

People should not discover late that their front door, farm gate, village road or emergency route has become an engineering problem.

7. The Farming, Tenants and Biosecurity Test

A working farm is a managed living system

Farmland is food production, livelihood, tenancy, animal welfare, machinery movement, drainage, soil, water, shelter and seasonal rhythm. Assessment must include landowners, tenants, workers, neighbouring farms, rural businesses and people who carry impacts without receiving land payments.

Biosecurity, livestock stress, calving and lambing, fencing, gates, troughs, field drainage, dogs, contractors, crop loss, soil compaction, reinstatement and emergency access require practical protocols and auditable responsibility.

Questions the ledger should answer

- Who controls contractor access, identification and biosecurity?
- How are crop, drainage, stock and access losses recorded and repaired?
- What happens when emergency works override normal land-access plans?

Impact is not limited to those who own land.

8. The Foreseeable Associated Infrastructure Test

If the hub enables more, assess more

A major grid hub may connect with or enable converter works, overhead lines, underground cables, roads, compounds, further bays, storage, private wire, generation or high-demand development. This report does not claim that an unverified future project is formally proposed.

The public-interest test is whether additional infrastructure is current, discussed, technically enabled, reasonably foreseeable, excluded or left open. Fragmented applications must not hide a connected maximum scenario.

Questions the ledger should answer

- What is included in the present design envelope?
- What further connections or bays are technically possible?
- Who assesses cumulative landscape, traffic, ecology, water, noise, fire and community effects?

No community should be asked to assess a hub while the infrastructure it may attract is left outside the frame.

9. The Fire, Emergency and Climate-Adaptation Test

The Cairngorms wildfire is a system stress test, not a rhetorical prop

[VERIFIED PUBLIC RECORD] The wildfire began on 15 July 2026. On 27 July, SFRS reported that around 70 firefighters, nine appliances, specialist wildfire resources and helicopter support remained involved, with smouldering areas and burning spots in the ground continuing. [S6-S7]

[VERIFIED PUBLIC RECORD] As of 28 July 2026, the incident remained active on day 14. The major-incident status had been stood down and residents had returned, but firefighting and multi-agency work continued; affected areas remained unsafe and closed. [S6-S10]

[VERIFIED PUBLIC RECORD] The incident caused major disruption, precautionary evacuation at Nethy Bridge, smoke impacts and route closures, while Copernicus emergency mapping was requested to assess wildfire extent and damage affecting forestry, natural vegetation and infrastructure. [S9-S11]

[VERIFIED PUBLIC RECORD - PROVISIONAL AREA ESTIMATE] Following an aerial assessment, SFRS estimated on 27 July that the fire had affected around 25 km². This is an operational affected-area estimate, not a confirmed final burn scar; later Copernicus or EFFIS mapping may revise it. [S6, S11]

[VERIFIED PUBLIC RECORD] The Park Authority stated on 23 July that it was too early to know the full nature impact and unsafe to access all of the site. NatureScot identifies Caledonian pinewood as protected habitat supporting characteristic species including capercaillie, black grouse and Scottish crossbill. [S8, S13]

[SECONDARY REPORTING] Reputable reporting has described effects on ancient Caledonian pine forest and likely losses among smaller wildlife and ground-nesting birds. These reports add urgency but should not substitute for the eventual ecological assessment. [S17]

PUBLIC-SAFE WORDING The safe statement today is not “30 km² of Caledonian forest has burnt”. It is: a prolonged wildfire has affected a large, ecologically important National Park landscape; the incident remained active; reported area estimates vary; and the final burn scar and ecological losses were not yet established.

Why this matters for rural infrastructure

Scotland’s Wildfires Strategic Action Plan, published on 5 March 2026, treats wildfire as an escalating threat and organises action around prevention, preparedness and response. It states that prevention is the most effective and least costly means of protecting communities, businesses, nature, property and infrastructure. [S14]

The practical lesson is that infrastructure site selection must account for emergency conditions that last days or weeks, change with wind and weather, close roads, require helicopters and specialist assets, draw on volunteers and land managers, and affect wildlife, water, businesses and settlements simultaneously.

Minimum wildfire and compound-risk questions

- What vegetation, peat, woodland, grass, crop, verge and forestry fuels surround each site and every access route?
- Could an external wildfire ignite transformers, cables, control buildings, stores, fuel, batteries or temporary compounds?
- Could an infrastructure incident ignite surrounding vegetation and spread off-site?
- What separation, vegetation management and firebreak design is proposed, and what ecological harm could that management itself cause?
- Are there at least two viable emergency approaches, considering prevailing wind, smoke, blocked roads, bridge restrictions, flood and winter conditions?
- What water is available for defensive firefighting, for how long, and during drought or concurrent demand?
- How will contaminated firefighting water, oils, sediment and debris be contained during heavy rain or power failure?
- What smoke or toxic-plume scenarios affect homes, farms, schools, care settings, livestock, roads and emergency responders?
- What happens when SFRS, police, ambulance, helicopters or roads teams are already committed to a regional wildfire or other major incident?
- How will communications, evacuation, welfare checks, livestock movement and power-dependent residents be supported?
- Who leads post-incident recovery, re-ignition monitoring, waste removal, ecological assessment and public reporting?

Emergency resilience should not be left to conditions written after a site has effectively been chosen.

10. The Conditional BESS Fire-Safety Test

Ask the questions without claiming a BESS proposal exists

Where battery storage is reasonably foreseeable, technically enabled or left open, the National Fire Chiefs Council guidance provides a strong pre-application checklist. It calls for timely and meaningful engagement between fire and rescue services, planners and developers; adequate water and firefighting infrastructure; vegetation management; prevention of on-site ignition and external fire impact; site-specific emergency planning; safe access and egress; management of contaminated runoff; and post-incident recovery. [S15]

The guidance specifically says external wildfire and surface-water flooding should be considered, recommends an alternative access point or, if that is not practicable, a perimeter loop, and identifies sensitive receptors including homes, care settings, protected habitats, watercourses, groundwater, wells, roads and utilities.

- Publish whether BESS is excluded, possible, enabled, discussed or left open.
- Where relevant, show cabinet/container numbers and chemistry, test evidence, separation distances, vegetation strategy, fault detection, isolation, suppression assumptions, water supply and duration.
- Model fire gas and smoke where sensitive receptors may be affected, using prevailing wind and credible scenarios.
- Provide independently designed runoff containment and a post-incident plan for re-ignition, damaged equipment and contaminated effluent.
- Agree access, water connections, site information and emergency response arrangements with the relevant fire and rescue service before consent.

GUARDRAIL NFCC guidance is technical planning evidence for a conditional question. It is not evidence that a formal BESS application currently exists at Strathbogie Hub.

11. The Cumulative and Compound-Risk Test

Several manageable projects can create one unmanageable period

Cumulative assessment should show when projects overlap, which roads, bridges, watercourses, emergency resources, contractor markets and accommodation they share, and whether their operation or incidents could be correlated.

Compound risk means more than adding visual effects. It includes wildfire plus drought; fire plus power loss; flooding plus contaminated runoff; abnormal loads plus road closure; construction plus harvest; storm damage plus communications failure; or two emergencies competing for the same people and equipment.

Questions the ledger should answer

- Is there a single construction calendar across connected and foreseeable projects?
- What is the worst credible overlap, not the average day?
- Which public services and community systems become single points of failure?

The valley experiences the whole, even when official processes divide it into separate cases.

12. The Noise, Vibration, Lighting and Dark-Skies Test

Rural quiet and darkness are part of the place

Assessment should cover HGV vibration, abnormal loads, breaking or piling, night work, transformers and converters, tonal and low-frequency noise, emergency generators, alarms, security lighting, night-time glow and cumulative effects from associated infrastructure.

Wildfire and emergency response may also bring prolonged helicopter, plant, lighting and access disturbance. That is necessary during an incident, but recovery and mitigation plans should recognise the additional burden on residents and wildlife.

A landscape does not only change by day. It changes after dark too.

13. The Property, Security and Privacy Test

Uncertainty has a cost before any digger arrives

Prolonged uncertainty, visual change, access alteration, road widening, noise, lighting and perceived blight may affect residential amenity, confidence, insurance and saleability. The ledger does not attempt individual valuations; it asks for honest assessment and accessible routes for evidence.

Fencing, CCTV, patrols, exclusion zones and emergency cordons are also infrastructure effects. Security design should not conflict with fire access, safe evacuation, wildlife movement or rural privacy.

Security infrastructure is still infrastructure.

14. The Waste, Materials, Carbon and Recovery Test

A green claim needs a material trail

Publish whole-life carbon, concrete, steel, aggregates, quarrying, haulage, road works, land-use change, water use, spoil, packaging, cable drums, oils, temporary works and disposal routes. Show what is avoided, reused, repurposed, recycled or disposed of and who audits the claim.

Climate claims should include carbon released through habitat loss or fire risk where material, as well as the resilience of mitigation under future climate conditions. Recovery plans must include contaminated materials, firefighting water, damaged equipment and ecological restoration.

Questions the ledger should answer

- What is the project carbon budget and how will it be updated?
- How much water is required in normal operation, construction and credible emergency?
- What financial security covers restoration and long-term failure?

Green claims are not credentials. Evidence is.

15. The Archaeology and Historic Landscape Test

A blank modern map does not mean a place has no history

Roads, trenches, compounds, pits, crossings and drainage can affect buried remains, field systems, walls, old routes, designed landscapes, place names and community memory. Assessment must cover the whole working footprint, not only permanent structures.

Emergency firebreaks and access may also disturb soil and heritage. Response must protect life first, while recovery records and assesses damage without exposing vulnerable sites.

Small memories can become important evidence.

16. The Design Envelope and Future Expansion Test

Assess the maximum, not the brochure version

Communities need to know whether they are responding to a fixed scheme or a flexible envelope. Publish maximum heights, platform levels, land take, roads, drainage, compounds, lighting, future bays, connections, cable corridors, storage potential and expansion limits.

Emergency, landscape, ecology and cumulative assessments should use the maximum credible build-out, not the smallest illustrative configuration.

Assess the maximum, not the brochure version.

17. The Community Benefit, Private Deal and Fairness Test

Benefit is not consent

Community benefit can support useful projects. It cannot replace lawful consent, avoidance, mitigation, monitoring, enforcement or the right to object. Land payments, access agreements, contracts and compensation can create unequal pressure inside small communities.

A fair process recognises that private benefit and public burden do not always land in the same place. It should protect confidentiality while preventing benefit language from delegitimising scrutiny.

Community benefit cannot be used to buy silence around public harm.

18. The Public-Body Capacity and Emergency-Resource Test

A private project can create public workload

Councils, roads teams, emergency services, regulators, ecological bodies, police, community councils and residents all carry workload. The Cairngorms response demonstrates how a prolonged incident can require large numbers of firefighters, specialist equipment, helicopters, land managers, volunteers and sustained coordination.

The applicant should show how monitoring, enforcement, emergency planning and recovery are funded without assuming that exhausted residents or already-stretched public bodies will fill the gaps.

Questions the ledger should answer

- What additional recurring demand will the project place on local services?
- How are concurrent regional incidents considered?
- Who funds training, exercises, equipment, monitoring and long-term recovery?

Do not approve what can only be enforced by exhausted residents with inboxes full of evidence.

19. The Human Impact and Hidden Burdens Test

A full ledger counts what is carried

Communities experience uncertainty, fear for roads, water, homes, farms and wildlife, pressure on neighbour relationships, private approaches, shifting information and broken sleep. They spend unpaid hours reading documents, checking maps, protecting sensitive evidence and pursuing acknowledgements.

This is not emotional background noise. It is part of the project's social and administrative footprint. Accessibility must include older, disabled, chronically ill, neurodivergent, low-income, isolated and non-digital residents, tenants, carers, farm workers and people without landowner status.

A benefits ledger counts what is paid for. A full ledger counts what is carried.

20. The Justice, Planetary Limits and Green-Claims Test

Green purpose does not erase industrial impact

Renewable electricity and resilient grids matter. That does not make every siting, design or construction choice automatically just or nature-positive. A modern transition should avoid unnecessary land take, habitat loss, carbon, road damage, pollution, community division and value extraction.

Historic memory matters without claiming that present infrastructure is identical to historic clearance. The careful question is who decides what rural land is for, who benefits, and who is expected to adapt, endure or lose the qualities that make remaining possible.

Questions the ledger should answer

- Are alternatives compared using the same evidence and the mitigation hierarchy?
- Does the proposal protect life and resilience under future climate conditions?
- Are “nature-positive” and “just transition” claims independently measurable?

Equal clarity for benefits and harms. Equal evidence for promises and impacts. Equal respect for the people and places carrying the transition.

What communities need now

Equal evidence for impacts before site selection hardens

1. A plain-English Full Impact Ledger for each shortlisted Strathbogie Hub site.
2. A like-for-like site comparison using the same maximum design envelope, viewpoints, data quality and climate assumptions.
3. A single public master timetable for surveys, enabling works, construction, traffic, mitigation, restoration, monitoring, temporary works removal and decommissioning.
4. A Rothiemay-focused consultation before any preferred site is selected, with large maps, 3D visualisations, roads, water, ecology and emergency information.
5. A reopened or extended evidence window after materially new information is published.
6. A full roads, bridges, abnormal-load, winter, flooding, school, farm, care and emergency-access assessment.
7. A River Deveron, burns, drainage and private-water protection plan with public monitoring thresholds and stop-work procedures.
8. Protected-species and seasonal-survey disclosure across permanent and temporary works, while protecting sensitive locations.

9. A foreseeable associated-infrastructure and maximum-build-out statement, including what is excluded, enabled, possible or left open.
10. A wildfire, drought and compound-risk assessment for each site and every emergency/access route.
11. Documented early engagement with SFRS, Police Scotland, Scottish Ambulance Service, council emergency planning, roads, public health and SEPA where relevant.
12. Where BESS is foreseeable, an NFCC-aligned fire, access, water, runoff, plume and recovery assessment - without treating a hypothetical BESS as a formal application.
13. A mitigation-status register showing design, funding, consent, legal security, commencement, maintenance, monitoring and success criteria.
14. An authority-accountability plan: who monitors, enforces, can stop works, receives evidence and pays for failure.
15. A whole-life carbon, water, materials, waste, circular-economy and climate-adaptation evidence statement.
16. Community-benefit safeguards protecting the right to object and recognising unequal public burden.
17. A human-impact, accessibility and community-cohesion assessment.
18. Independent monitoring, public reporting, complaint tracking and corrective-action rules.
19. Bonds or other financial security where restoration, contamination or long-term failure could fall on the public.

Who benefits? Who pays? Who carries the impact? Who monitors the harm? Who enforces the promises? What is lost? What is restored? What is left behind?

Mitigation and accountability register

Every significant mitigation promise should be entered in a public register. “Proposed planting” or “managed through a later plan” is not enough.

Mitigation / safeguard	Status	Start and completion	Responsible body	Success measure	Failure response
Example: habitat creation	Proposed / designed / funded / secured / consented / active	Before loss? Parallel? Years later?	Applicant, landowner, contractor, authority	Area, condition, species response, survival period	Stop, redesign, remediate, bond drawdown
Example: fire and emergency plan	Outline / agreed / exercised / updated	Before consent, construction and operation	Operator + responders	Access, water, communications, exercise outcomes	Corrective action and re-test
Example: water protection	Baseline / live monitoring / restored	Before ground works through post-construction	Applicant + independent monitor	Public thresholds and trends	Automatic stop-work and investigation

ACCOUNTABILITY TEST A mitigation proposal is credible only when its delivery, timing, legal security, monitoring, success criteria and remedy for failure are visible.

Source register

Sources were checked for this update on 28 July 2026. Fast-moving incident information should be rechecked before reuse. Links may change.

S1 Save the Deveron Valley, Full Impact Ledger - 1 July 2026 working draft. Original public report updated by this document. <https://savethedeeron.org/Full-Impact-Ledger-Save-the-Deveron-Valley-Working-Draft-1-July-2026.pdf>

S2 SSSEN Transmission, Shetland HVDC Link 2 / Strathbogie Hub project page. 17 June 2026 update records ground investigations at the two shortlisted sites. <https://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/projects/project-map/shetland-hvdc-link-2/>

S3 Energy Consents Unit, ECU00005165. Official application record; status referred to DPEA.

<https://www.energyconsents.scot/ApplicationDetails.aspx?cr=ECU00005165>

S4 DPEA, TRL-270-2. Official inquiry case record for the Beaulay to Peterhead overhead line; the record lists community-hearing sessions at Inverness on 18 August and Turriff on 25 August 2026.

<https://www.dpea.scotland.gov.uk/CaseDetails.aspx?id=127181>

S5 SSSEN Transmission, 2026 Economic Report. Promoter benefit and economic claims; not independent proof of project-level impacts. <https://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/about-us/economic-report/>

S6 Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, Cairngorms wildfire update, 27 July 2026. Official affected-area estimate and continuing incident-status update. <https://www.firescotland.gov.uk/news/cairngorms-wildfire-update-progress-made-as-firefighting-operations-continue/>

S7 Cairngorms National Park Authority, wildfire update, 27 July 2026 at 19:15. Latest official Park update available during drafting. <https://cairngorms.co.uk/news/glenmore-and-strath-nethy-wildfire-update-27-july-at-1915>

S8 Cairngorms National Park Authority, wildfire update, 23 July 2026. Closures, community/business effects and statement that full nature damage was not yet known. <https://cairngorms.co.uk/news/glenmore-fire-update-23-july-at-5pm>

S9 Scottish Government, Cairngorms National Park wildfire update. Major-incident and precautionary evacuation context. <https://www.gov.scot/news/cairngorms-national-park-wildfire-update/>

S10 Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, residents return while response continues. Official community and response update. <https://www.firescotland.gov.uk/news/residents-can-return-to-their-properties-as-the-multiagency-response-to-the-fire-in-cairngorms-national-park-continues/>

S11 Copernicus Emergency Management Service, wildfire in Glenmore. Emergency mapping request for extent and damage assessment. <https://mapping.emergency.copernicus.eu/news/wildfire-in-glenmore-united-kingdom/>

S12 NatureScot, Standing Advice for Planning Consultations - Birds. Main breeding season March to August and development-disturbance risks. <https://www.nature.scot/doc/standing-advice-planning-consultations-birds>

S13 NatureScot, Caledonian pinewood. Protected habitat context and characteristic species. <https://www.nature.scot/landscapes-and-habitats/habitat-types/woodland-habitats/caledonian-pinewood>

S14 Scottish Government, Wildfires Strategic Action Plan, published 5 March 2026. Prevention, preparedness and response framework. <https://www.gov.scot/publications/strategic-action-plan-wildfires/>

S15 National Fire Chiefs Council, grid-scale energy storage system planning guidance. Revised guidance on siting, wildfire, access, water, runoff, plume and recovery. <https://nfcc.org.uk/our-services/building-safety/grid-scale-energy-storage-system-planning-guidance-for-fire-and-rescue-services/>

S16 Scottish Government, Scottish National Adaptation Plan annual report 2025-26. Place-based climate adaptation and infrastructure resilience context. <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-national-adaptation-plan-annual-report-2025-2026/>

S17 The Guardian, ecological reporting from the Cairngorms wildfire, 27 July 2026. Secondary reporting; ecological effects require later official verification. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2026/jul/27/swathes-of-cairngorms-scotland-unrecognisable-after-12-days-of-cataclysmic-wildfires>

S18 Cairngorms National Park fire-management byelaw information. Current prevention context and seasonal prohibition on fires and barbecues. <https://cairngorms.co.uk/our-work/wildfire-management>

Version note

Reviewed working draft v1.1, 28 July 2026. Independent fact-check corrections integrated: official SFRS affected-area estimate, active-incident status, exact wildfire-plan publication date and DPEA procedural wording. Prepared by Save the Deveron Valley for public scrutiny and community learning. This document supersedes the 1 July 2026 working draft where the wording conflicts. It remains a living evidence document, not legal, engineering, ecological or emergency-response advice.

The first feedback deadline has passed. The scrutiny has not.